

1.
A) The work of restoration, excepting the rebuilding of walls and plastering of ceilings after insulation and rock lath, and plumbing, was done by E.B.H. and D.J.H.

This is an effort to outline the development of the structure of the Sydenham House. Much of the information concerning the original structure and the changes made by generations of Sydenhams was gained during the restoration of the house by D.J. & Elizabeth B. Henderson, from 1955 on. The H.A.B.S. survey in 1933 was accurate, but it did not reveal the character of the original structure, or give any clues as to the changes, enlargements, alterations that were made by the Sydenhams during the approximately 100 years after the house was built by John and Susannah Sydenham, circa 1712-1720.

Some of the statements in the following are made with certainty; others are based on reasonable conclusions from observations made during the restoration. No structural changes ^{of the building} were made during the restoration, which consisted of repairs of damage by termites, squirrels and weather. This damage was extensive. The only structural change or improvement is the $3\frac{1}{2}$ " cement floor in the cellar, ~~made by D.J.H.~~

Exterior

The walls of the house are of rubble stone, 15 to 20 inches thick, ~~extending about 24 inches above the second floor as originally built.~~ The frame portion above the wall came later, when roofs were raised, changing the roofs from salt box to gable. At some time, probably mid-eighteenth-

deeds, the rubble wall on the front of the house became unstable. A heavy coat of cement was applied. This was before the era of Portland cement. From an aesthetic standpoint, it is unfortunate that the wall was not stabilized on the inside. At some later date, the interior of ~~a portion~~ the westerly end of the front wall collapsed and this portion was rebuilt during the restoration. The westerly wall was unstable, having bulged and cracked. It was taken down completely and rebuilt by a very competent mason, using the same stones, without breaking or dressing any of them.

The five front windows and the two westerly ones had solid paneled shutters which had rotted and fallen off. One of them was sufficiently intact to be preserved as a pattern. The strap hinges were salvaged for future use since they are genuine early American. All of the weatherboards on the frame portions are original save for a few patches on the front and those under the windows of the kitchen. The shelter over the kitchen door is by D.J.H., replacing a ramshackle lean-to. The shake roof over the beehive oven is by D.J.H. The red cedar shingle roof on the house was installed in 1981. ~~Also~~ The four storm doors were made and hung by D.J.H. The storm windows are, of course, modern.

Interior

Much of the glass in the multipaned windows was broken. The wood of the sashes had not been painted for perhaps fifty years. It was black and fuzzy and so delicate that a shake during removal of the sash from the window casing would have collapsed the muntins and destroyed the sash.

E.B.H. removed all the glass, ~~the~~ broken and unbroken, from all the sashes, treated the wood with linseed oil and turpentine, and reglazed them. The sashes are as solid as when they were first installed.

All floors in the house ^{except the pantry} are original. They were hand scrubbed with a strong solution of trisodium phosphate, the accumulated dirt removed from cracks between the floor boards, and the bare wood treated with a solution of linseed oil and turpentine. Very large cracks were filled with putty, softened sufficiently with linseed oil to work in a caulking gun. The pantry floor had completely rotted; the present floor was constructed by D.J.H. All window curtains were made by E.B.H. and ^{are} replaced by her as needed. Curtain rods and holders are by D.J.H.

Paint was removed from All the woodwork and doors ~~was~~, including the front stairs and portions of the upstairs hall floor. Varnish was removed from the mahogany banister of the front stairs. After paint removal, all these areas

were treated with linseed oil and turpentine.

Kitchen

The fireplace ^{had been} ~~was~~ closed and the chimney used as a flue for a Boyton coal range.

New ~~log~~ ~~stove~~,

1. The wainscoting above the window sills on the north and east walls.
2. The mantel and panel ^{the fireplace.} ~~above~~ ~~the~~ Panel made of a pine shelf found in the attic room, with border of oak flooring from a wrecked 19th century mansion in Bernardsville; purchased from Irvington Wreckers.
3. Framing of hall doorway; wooden parts of door latch.
4. Tea towel rack; paper towel holder; spice cabinet; all shelves save the one on the east wall, moved from location along side doorway over a cast iron sink; lighting, Holofane shades found in lighting fixtures in the house, which was partially wired, knob and tube.
5. Early American hinges on door were salvaged from front window shutters.

Restored

Windows and all ~~woodwork~~ other woodwork is original; paint was removed.

Eath and plaster ceiling was removed.

~~in~~ Ceiling was insulated, with beams exposed.

Pegged coat rack was found in attic room. It replaces ~~over~~

Dining Room.

This room has four stone walls, and was the first house, built on an existing root cellar. This house was a "salt box", which included an unexcavated area alongside the root cellar, having access to the cellar's northerly entrance. The oak logs supporting the floor, originally supported the roof of the root cellar. Termites had destroyed the ends of these logs that entered the front wall, and the logs were supported ^{only} by the nails holding them to floor boards and the ends in the rear foundation. The 4"x6" timbers stabilizing these logs were installed by D.J.H.

Doors to the kitchen and sitting room are original and are the oldest paneled doors in the house. The entrance door in the east wall was a badly deteriorated modern door. It was replaced by ~~the~~ the battered door which covered the hatchway to the westerly attic, ~~by D.J.H.~~ (B)

Window sashes are original. The 12 over 12 front windows are probably the oldest in the house; both the rails and the muntins are through-mortised and pegged. ^(A) Seat of the 9 over 9 easterly window renewed, ~~by D.J.H.~~ Right side of embrasure of left front window renewed by D.J.H. Repair at the ^{bottom} ~~base~~ of left side of right front window was made apparently many years ago.

About one-half of the base board ^{along} ~~the~~

(B) The pintle for the bottom hinge of the original door is still in place. It is similar to the pintles of the hinges for the ~~door~~ door to the sitting room.

(A) All other sashes are through-mortised but only the rails are pegged.

the front wall had to be renewed, ^{and} ~~by the~~ simulated as closely as possible.

It appears that the fireplace was built some time after the house, and originally had no mantel. The mantel was probably added in the early 1800's. It was so low that it obscured the stone lintel and ~~a~~ the wood framing on the side^s narrowed the opening to the point where it was dangerous to build a fire. Apparently the fireplace was seldom used, although ^{the inside} the wood was slightly ^{charred.} scorched. ~~D.T.H.~~ The breast of the mantel is original. The vertical supports are by D.T.H. All corner beading on these ~~supports~~ pieces was done by hand.

The ~~bas~~ sawed lath and plaster ceiling was replaced, exposing the beams. Paint was removed from all wood. Doorsaddle at kitchen door installed, and saddles at the other doors renewed. ~~the~~ also the strip covering the junctions at different levels, of the dining and sitting room floors. The wide saddle at the kitchen door was necessary to cover very badly worn floor. The single 12" wide piece of this saddle was taken from an old sewing machine cabinet found in the house.

Sitting Room.

This room is in the second house, ~~and~~ has three stone walls, and is about 3 feet wider than the dining room.

The hand-split lath and plaster ceiling was removed, insulation installed, new ceiling, with beams exposed. There is ample evidence that these beams were originally exposed; the decorative beading, and the fact that the walls had been painted between the beams.

The ^{original} sashes of the window had apparently been lost many years ago and were replaced by modern, double-hung sash, the only double hung sash in the house.

No other change in this room save paint removal.

The fireplace mantel is certainly the oldest in the house. This was the only fireplace in the house that had not been closed, ~~and~~

The small door in the north wall, fitted with butterfly hinges covers an opening in the wall which was later closed to form a small closet with shelves. The back of this closet consists of some early variety of sheet rock. When this second house was built, this was an outside wall and this opening may have been used to bring in wood for a fireplace which was much larger than the present one.

Downstairs Hall

No change save removal of ~~the~~ hand-split lath and plaster ceiling, pre-ceiling, insulating, with exposed beams, Paint removal.

The coat racks were found in attic rooms.

After the split lath and plaster ceiling was removed in the sitting room, hall and front parlor, it became evident that this second house was originally a room nearly forty feet long and about fourteen feet wide, a living and dining area, with the huge fireplace for cooking and heating at its westerly end, a smaller one at the easterly end, and a narrow open stairway leading to a sleeping area above. The westerly wall of the present hall was ~~later~~ built later alongside this open stairway. This is confirmed by examination of the upper right hand corner of the facing of the doorway and the ripple in the wall plaster above it.

Front Parlor.

With the collapse of the inside of the front wall many years ago, the two front windows were completely lost. Window facing and molding reproduced by local lumber mill. Windows ^{were} built and installed in new wall ~~to~~ and given two coats of paint. This was before we decided to remove all paint, hence the odd pieces in the sides of the embrasures. The dark pieces are planks found in the attic.

i.e. The window beside the fireplace is original, save the sashes. It is interesting to note that all the wood in the embrasure ^{ies} the large panel below and the slabs on the sides and top, are planed smooth on the exposed side only. The backs are roughly adzed to an average thickness of one and one-half inches. This is true of the windows in the dining and sitting rooms. One of these slabs is preserved and stored in an attic room. A sample of the plaster from the front parlor ceiling and a bundle of split lath is ^{is} also stored in an attic room. A bundle of these laths was given to Raymond Dey and is exhibited in a collection of early American artifacts in the Dey Mansion in Totowa.

The fireplace with Adam style mantel is not the original one built when the second house was constructed. When the ceiling was removed, it was evident that the first fireplace was a huge, walk-in fireplace.

This is confirmed by the chamfer in the oak beam,
 the ^{two} short beams projecting into the wall ~~and~~ from
 their half dovetail joining with the oak
 beam. These beams supported what must have
 been a huge stone chimney. The foundation of
 this fireplace in the ^{cellar} confirms ~~the~~ ^{its} size and
 existence. ~~This~~ This room was certainly the
 first kitchen. ~~The first floor of the second~~
~~house was a room nearly forty feet long and~~

It is reasonable to assume from examination of the hall that, in the beginning, this long room was divided by a wooden partition ~~consisting of 4" tongue and~~
~~groove planks~~. The four notches in the beam at the longitudinal center of the hall were made to permit nailing of the top of the studs which held the planks of this partition. Large wrought nails were pulled from these slots by D. J. H. ~~Pieces of~~
~~these planks were used as "cats" between the~~